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MISSION FIELD OF THE SOUTH.

By the Rev. MOSES D. HOGE, D. D.,

Of Richmond, Va.

Delivered on Friday, 10th of October, 1873,

AT THE MEETING OF

THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE,

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

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Photography has illustrated the possibility of printing a volume as large as Homer's Iliad on a slip of paper no larger than the palm of a man's hand, but science has discovered no method of enabling a speaker to condense into the limits of a few minutes the discussion of a theme requiring as many hours for its proper elucidation. In attempting to portray "The Mission Field of the South," I can only do as the painter who is compelled to make a hurried sketch of a wide landscape; he can only present it in outline, with a few touches which rather suggest its salient points than depict them. There is no time for filling in, or for minute delineation. If he cannot produce a completed picture, he must content himself with a cartoon.

Speakers and writers vary in their enumeration of the States which constitute what we familiarly call "The South." I shall adopt Commodore Maury's classification, which includes Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Tennessee, with the Indian Territory and New Mexico, which are classed with the Southern States because they lie east of the Rocky Mountains, south of 36 deg. 30 min. north latitude, and are drained by the rivers which empty into the Gulf of Mexico. Some of the States just enumerated are the largest in the Union—one of them, Texas, being equal in extent to all the New England States together, and all the Middle States besides, and perhaps a portion of one of the Western States in addition.

PHYSICAL ADVANTAGES.

The eleven Southern States together occupy an area nearly equal to that of Austria, Prussia, France and Italy, with their combined population of more than 120,000,000. Such is the extent of the missionary field of which I am to speak. But there is no moral interest attached to mere territorial magnitude. The physical character of this great domain, however, has a most im-

classes, and they are addressing themselves earnestly to the great undertaking. Thousands of our planters and farmers at the close of a desolating war, even before they began to retrieve their material losses, made provision for the education of their sons, for the purpose of securing to them a capital which none of the vicissitudes of life could deprive them of, and by which they might always obtain an honorable maintenance. They did not agree with Montaigne's father, that "your scholar costs too much," but they believed there was no investment of money which brought returns so splendid, not only to the individual mind illumined and invigorated by noble learning, but to the State, whose shattered fortunes could be best reconstructed by filling it with young men qualified by thorough classical and scientific training to develop its material resources, as well as advance its intellectual and moral power. They knew that if the prestige so long attached to gentle blood and hereditary wealth could not be maintained, the aristocracy of talent and acquirement would never lose its influence. The young men, too, comprehended the situation; and the consequence was, all the colleges and higher schools of the South began to revive even before trade and commerce revived, and were filled with eager, ambitious young men, determined to achieve whatever victories may be won on the peaceful fields of studious letters.

In Virginia we have the advantage of an institution which is, in effect, a Normal School to all other educational institutions. The University of Virginia was the first in the land organized on a system which made it the true culmination of the primary school, the academy, and the college, above them all in its standards, yet drawing them all upward, by degrees, to an approximation with itself, by furnishing them with a proper ideal, and by supplying them with teachers and professors competent to apply the true principles of instruction.

Lest I should seem to speak too warmly of our University, with its elective system and independent schools—some of them of applied science—and Professors, better known, perhaps, in Europe than nearer home, I may say that a distinguished scholar of Great Britain who recently visited this country to study its educational systems, in his published estimate of our University, gives it a rank higher than I have done, and says some of its methods of instruction, long familiar there, are just beginning to be introduced into the best institutions abroad.—[Dr. Porter, author of "Giant Cities of Bashan," &c.] And now that Virginia, too long content with fostering her higher schools, has taken up in earnest the education of the masses, it is easy to see what an impulse will be given to the cause by such teachers as the University is sending out, and by the elevated standard which it presents to all institutions of inferior grade.

But more important than the removal of ignorance is the removal of spiritual blindness; and it is with Christian as with heathen countries, that though the teacher and the preacher may go together, it is the Gospel, after all, which is the power of God to the salvation of men.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUTHERN PEOPLE.

Having spoken of obstacles, I may now enumerate some facilities to the progress of the Gospel in the Southern field.

One is, that the people of the South are the most homogeneous on the continent. As yet, the foreign element is comparatively small, and the continental forms of unbelief do not prevail among them. Speaking the same language, with common traditions and sympathies binding them together, of course the religious teacher obtains readier access to them than where different races, tongues, and creeds are elements of disintegration in society.

Again: our native population is not restless. It clings to the old ancestral home; it also cleaves to ancestral religious faith. It not only abides by the soil in which the dust of noble forefathers is mingled; it is loyal to the creed associated with the memories of pious parents. The novel and specious forms of error, which elsewhere have obliterated the old landmarks, find no welcome among them. The irreligion of the South is rather the irreligion of recklessness, of ignorance, of passion, than of infidelity, or of crystalized forms of unbelief. There are many communities in this land where the truth can scarcely penetrate, so crusted over are they, and incased by formulated systems of impiety. But no neighborhood in the South is inaccessible because of intrenched infidelity. Skeptical *isms*, which spread like epidemics in some quarters, were never popular there. And least of all are our people infected by the scientific skeptical philosophy of the day, which asserts such an unvarying uniformity in the operations of physical law as to leave no place in the universe of God for the supernatural, and therefore denies miracle, discredits prophecy, and silences prayer. It follows, therefore, that when the Christian teacher comes among us he does not have the double task of first storming some outwork of infidelity before he attacks the central citadel of natural aversion to evangelical truth, and this greatly facilitates his labors among our people.

CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION OF THE SOUTH.

I am tempted to enter into these details about Southern characteristics, because there is perhaps no part of the world so little understood, no people about whom so many erroneous impressions prevail. We have few opportunities for correcting them. Our large cities are few and far apart. Our newspapers are for the most part provincial. Distinguished foreigners visiting the United States find more to interest them north of the Potomac, and seldom derive their information of the South from personal observation. If we sought for vindication, however, we would find it in an impartial and official source, bearing a testimony to our Christian civilization so emphatic as to be worth reproducing.

One of the tables of the United States Census Reports gives the statistics of pauperism and crime in all the States of the Union. Freedom from both of these evils unquestionably indicates a healthful and elevated civilization. The Southern States stand highest in the list in these respects. I contrast the state-

ments made in the Census Reports with regard to pauperism and crime in the New England States and in the Southern States, not for the purpose of making an invidious comparison, which I have no desire to do, but because the New England States are generally spoken of as distinguished for thrifty industry and high moral character.

I. 1.—Pauperism prevails in the New England States in the proportion of 44 to every 10,000 of the entire population. In the Southern States the proportion is 13 to every 10,000 of the entire population. 2. In the native New England population the ratio is 47 to every 10,000. In the entire white population of the South, native and foreign, the ratio is only 14 to 10,000. 3. In the foreign population of the New England States the ratio of pauperism is 35 to every 10,000. Among the colored people of the Southern States the ratio is 13 in every 10,000.

II. 1.—In the United States Census tables of criminal statistics we are told that in the entire New England population the proportion is 11 in 10,000; in the entire Southern population it is 8 in 10,000. 2. In the native New England population it is 8 in every 10,000. In the entire white population of the South, native and foreign, the proportion of criminals is a little over $4\frac{1}{2}$ in every 10,000. 3. In the foreign New England population the proportion of criminals is 26 in every 10,000; in the colored population of the Southern States it is about 13 in 10,000.

III. Another surprising revelation which these Census tables make is in reference to church accommodations. 1. In the New England States there are 5,421 churches, with 2,203,607 sittings. [Total population, 3,487,924.] In the Southern States there are 18,000 churches, with sittings for 4,706,937 persons. [Total population, 9,487,386.] 2. Or to state it in another form, in New England there is one church for 643 inhabitants. In the South there is one church for 518 inhabitants.

Thus we see that if the ability of a people to provide for their own support without being dependent on charity; if reverence for law, if generous provision for the ordinances of the Gospel are constituent elements of a true Christian civilization, then, when there is a call for a judgment by these criteria, the Southern States step to the front.

THE NEGROES.

And yet there is a vast work to be done for the evangelization of the native population of the South, and a still greater for the spiritual welfare of two other very dissimilar but most interesting races, the one in the providence of God intermingled with us, and the other dwelling upon our border. In the 11 Southern States there are about 5,500,000 whites, and a little less than 4,000,000 negroes. In three of the Southern States they outnumber the whites. In South Carolina they have a majority of more than 125,000.

It will be interesting to those whose sympathies have long been enlisted in behalf of the freedmen, and who have had little opportunity of learning what

Christrian philanthropy is attempting for their improvement, to hear something definite with regard to the efforts which are made, first, for their secular education, and, second, for their religious training.

The Freedmen's Bureau, out of $13,000,000, expended only $3,500,000 for educational purposes. [Letter from Virginia, in *Old and New*, Boston, November, 1872.] But what is needed is some regular and permanent provision, such as is contemplated in the free school system of the Southern States, which provides for the education of the children of both races. Oppressed as were the property-holders by the burdens of taxation, they nevertheless addressed themselves to the work of establishing free schools for white and colored children without discriminating between them.

Virginia has taken the lead in this great work, and there the Free School system, inaugurated in 1870, has been most faithfully and efficiently managed, as it might have been all over the South, but for the fact that in some of the States, where aliens have monopolized office, and ignorance has expelled intelligence from the halls of legislation, the public school fund has been squandered and the interests of the colored people betrayed.

The question of levying a local tax for providing school accommodations was carried in Virginia in every case where it was presented to the suffrage of the people, except in one district in which the colored people voted solidly against it. In another large district where the colored people were in the majority they left the question of the school tax to be decided exclusively by the whites, who were the property-holders. Not a vote was cast by a freedman, but the white people voted unanimously for the tax.

The establishment of Normal Schools for the negroes, like the excellent and well-endowed Agricultural and Polytechnic Institute at Hampton, near Fortress Monroe, will do more than anything else to confirm their possibly wavering interest in educational schemes for their benefit. Enlightened and well trained colored teachers, thoroughly understanding the idiosyncrasies of their own race, and sincerely desirous to promote their good, without partisan or selfish aims, will become the best agency for keeping alive their present zeal for self-improvement, and for instructing them how to guard the great political estate so recently and suddenly conferred on them against the raids of pillaging and unprincipled demagogues.

AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES.

Next, as to the efforts made for the direct religious instruction of the freedmen, I may say that every Evangelical Church in the South has their spiritual welfare at heart, and gladly embraces every opportunity for doing them good. The colored people among us prefer separate, independent ecclesiastical organizations, and those of the white race, who have given the subject the most conscientious thought, are disposed to encourage them in forming churches of their own, with ministers and officers of their own choosing—all to be gathered, when they become sufficiently numerous, under the care of Presby-

teries, Synods, Conferences, Associations, or Conventions, according to the denominations to which they belong; their white brethren, in the meantime, giving them all the encouragement, pecuniary aid, and moral support in their power. This is the preference of the freedmen, and the policy of the Methodist and Baptist Churches, to which denominations the colored people of the South for the most part belong.

Few of them now remain in connection with the Methodist Church South. But with its approval and under its auspices, an African Methodist church has been organized, distinct and independent, yet still looking to their old spiritual guardians for sympathy, counsel and help. This they receive. All the houses of worship belonging to the Methodist Church South, which were built for their colored members, are transferred to them when they organize churches of their own, and in every way they are encouraged and assisted in carrying out their wish to maintain a distinctive ecclesiastical life, with congregations composed exclusively of their own people, under the control of their pastors and officers of their own race.

This instinctive and intense regard for race, which first segregates and then consolidates them, is a stronger bond than that of nationality, and it is perhaps a prophecy and a preparation for the time when they will be colonized into some State or Territory of their own. This will probably be the happy and harmonious solution of the problem of their destiny in this country, for all history shows how difficult it is for two races so dissimilar in character and capacity to live together in the peaceful exercise of co-ordinate authority in Church and State.

It is now admitted to be one of the great discoveries of modern missions, that Christianity is most rapidly and permanently advanced by the establishment of self-reliant churches, composed wholly of native converts, each church complete in itself, with pastors of the same race with the people. The illustration of this principle is already beginning to be seen in the South. The colored Bishop of the Methodist Church, the Right Rev. W. H. Miles, a man of eminent prudence and piety, at a recent General Conference held at Augusta, Ga., reported 14 annual Conferences, with more than 600 traveling preachers, and nearly 600 local preachers, and a membership of about 70,000. He opposes mixed schools, mixed membership, and favors an organization confined to his own people—not in any spirit of antagonism or unkindness, for he exhorts them to cultivate the most amicable relations with the whites, and to identify themselves with the interests of the communities in which they reside.

Nor are our Baptist Churches less active and efficient in their labors for the colored people. They have missionary societies, whose business it is to set the blacks to doing something for themselves, and the whites to helping them. They find the Sunday School to be an instrumentality admirably adapted for giving them just the training they most need, because of the opportunity it affords of imparting such instruction as informs the understanding and enlightens the conscience. These are springing up all over the South, and those which are

maintained during the Winter as well as the Summer months are called by the significant name of "Evergreens."

WHAT THE FREEDMEN NEED.

But after all, the paramount necessity of the Southern African churches is a thoroughly educated ministry of their own. Nothing can be substituted for this, nor can the complete development of their ecclesiastical life ever be attained without it. The negroes are constitutionally imaginative and mercurial, with a strong inclination to superstition and fanaticism, and what they most require to counteract these tendencies is systematic instruction in divine truth—not the technical systems of schools, not metaphysical subtleties or sectarian polemics—but a grounding in fundamental principles—such a grounding as comes from illustrating these principles so simply, and reiterating them so patiently, as to insure a true and clear comprehension of them. If ignorant enthusiasts and fiery fanatics are their spiritual guides, their religion will be the intoxication of excited animal sensibilities, full of the chimeras of distempered fancy, instead of the calm sobriety of rational faith and the salutary convictions of conscience enlightened by the Spirit of Truth. The Church, therefore, which secures this kind of instruction for them is their greatest benefactor. The American Baptist Home Missionary Society is doing a noble work in this direction. It has established seven schools, one in Washington City, and the others in the Southern States at well-selected points, viz.: Richmond, Raleigh, Columbia, Augusta, New Orleans, and Nashville, for the education of young men of color for the Gospel ministry.

TYPE OF CIVILIZATION AND CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE FREEDMEN.

Let us hope that these various instrumentalities will be blessed by the great Head of the Church to the highest good of the African people in this country. Nothing but the conservative power of Christianity can secure them against the evil influences which threaten them. Nothing else can bring them a happy future. There is much to hinder their attainment of a high degree of civilization. They are mentally and physically unfitted to cope with the superior energy of the white races. It is no disparagement to the African, and no reflection on the wisdom and goodness of the Creator that these inequalities exist. The truest friend of the African is not the man who inspects him through the rose-colored lenses of a sentimental philanthropy, but one who looks at him in the light of truth, recognizing his weaknesses that he may guard him against their influence and appreciating his good qualities that he may encourage him in their development.

There is before him the hope of a moral and spiritual progression of greater worth than any that is merely mental; and though his type of civilization and Christianity may be different from that of the Caucasian, it need not be necessarily an inferior one; though he may never be distinguished in the walks of philosophic or scientific research, or of broad statesmanship, or of original discovery, yet he may attain to a spiritual development of the gentlest and most

attractive character. The very traits so prominent in his nature, his freedom from ambition and avarice, his humble, docile, forgiving, contented, patient, loving, submissive spirit may, under the cherishing and sanctifying influence of divine grace, prepare him for a type of Christian civilization, softer, kindlier, fuller of the virtues of the Sermon on the Mount, more self-sacrificing, and richer in the sweet charities of the Gospel than any yet exhibited by the more aggressive and dominant white races.

THE RED MAN.

A glance at another race thrown upon our Christian charity, in the providence of God, will complete my sketch of the "Mission Field of the South."

On the 100th meridian, between Kansas and Texas, lies what is called the Indian Territory, a land of water-brooks, and fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land spread out in undulating plains, many of them of inexhaustible fertility, through which flow broad aud navigable rivers, bordered by forests; a land of temperate and healthful climate, and larger in extent than either of the great States of New York, Pennsylvania, or Virginia. This Territory is now the home of the Indian tribes once dwelling in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida, but removed by the Government of the United States to the reservations allotted to them and marked by treaty boundaries. The Indian tribes inhabiting this Territory are the Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks and Seminoles, with a few remnants of other tribes. These Indians form a part of the aborigines to whom this continent once belonged, driven from year to year by aggressive white emigration into narrower limits, and now nearly all removed to the west of the Mississippi River.

To those who are fond of observing the characteristic distinctions of race, the Indian of our frontier will furnish an interesting study. Many of his characteristics are in marked contrast with those of the African, which we have just been considering. The North American Indian is haughty in demeanor, taciturn, stoical, watchful, often revengeful, implacable and cruel, yet hospitable, grateful for kindness, of a temperament imaginative and poetic, dignified in manner, ceremonious, regardful of the ties of consanguinity, full of veneration for ancestral traditions and usages, with powers of expression which often rise to impressive and effective oratory.

HUMANITARIANISM.

Though the Indian has not attracted the attention or called forth the Christian activities of our people as the negro has done—for philanthropy in this country has been for the most part *monochromatic*, and not much tinged by the red ray—yet no efforts have been more richly rewarded than those which have been made for the spiritual good of the poor Indian. Recently, indeed, a noble advance has been made in that direction. Within a year or two the Government has accepted the aid of religious bodies in its efforts to pacify and civilize the savages on our Western plains. In Washington City, in January last, the

Board of Indian Commissioners held a conference with some of the Missionary Boards which have been co-operating with the official agents of the Government, and the reports made and the addresses delivered indicate a new era in popular interest in behalf of the civil and spiritual condition of the Indian. Those were impressive words of Bishop Whipple when he said: "Very much of the hostility of the Indian is the hostility of despair; it is the terrible blow which a man who has no mercy to hope for, strikes toward his enemies." And those were brave words addressed to the Board of Indian Commissioners in 1872 by the President of the United States, in reference to the rumor of a change in the humane policy which had been pursued toward the Indian. "Such a thing has not been thought of. I do not believe our Creator has placed the different races of men on the earth with the view of having the stronger exert his energies in exterminating the weaker. If any change take place in the Indian policy of the Government while I hold my present office, it will be on the humanitarian side of the question."

The improved condition of the Indians of the Southwest Territory illustrates the happy results of Christian effort in their behalf. They are civilized communities. They wear the dress and live in houses built and furnished as among the humbler classes in the States. They till their fields and have herds of domestic animals. They have printing presses, newspapers, and books in the English language and in their own tongues. They have more schools, more churches, in proportion to population, and larger attendance on religious services, and contribute more money for benevolent objects than the people of any Territory of the United States. Life and property are more safe among them, and there are fewer violations of law among them than in the Territories occupied by the whites. [Fourth Annual Report of Board of Indian Commissioners.]

The Southern Methodists and Baptists are doing faithful work among them. So, too, is the Northern Presbyterian Board, especially among the Creeks and Seminoles. But the most extensive missionary operations in the Territory are conducted by the Southern Presbyterian Church. We have seven missionaries, three female missionary assistants, and a number of native helpers, together with an important institution, Spencer Academy, under the care of three able instructors, and with judicious management destined to become a power for good in advancing the educational and religious interests of the Indian people.

Such are some of the gleanings of information which I have the honor to lay before you from the Missionary Field of the South.